

# What is moderation and why should we moderate?

Module One: Moderation Series for  
Primary Teachers

# Module Overview

This module is designed to support teachers to develop shared expectations and understanding of student learning and progress through the process of moderation.

It looks at:

- What is moderation?
- The principles of moderation.
- The benefits of moderation.

# Moderation

- Moderation is the process of teachers sharing their expectations and understandings of standards with each other in order to improve the consistency of their decisions about student learning and achievement.  
(<http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Moderation#1>)
- Moderation supports teachers to compare their judgments to either confirm or adjust them. The process involves teachers sharing evidence of learning and collaborating to establish a shared understanding of what quality of evidence looks like. Schools use moderation to increase dependability of teacher judgments.

# Moderation

- “ Moderation is concerned with the consistency, comparability and fairness of professional judgments about the levels demonstrated by students”. (Maxwell 2002)
- The National Standards support consistency of judgment and moderation by providing examples and illustrations of the standard required.

# Moderation: being confident about teacher judgments

Comparable assessment judgments result from teachers comparing their assessments with an agreed matrix, progression or specific assessment characteristics and agreeing on a level or 'standard'.

- *What do you compare your judgments against? (e.g. PAT norms; school expectations of the year level; experience of this year level)*
- *Would other teachers, or students agree with your judgments? How do you know?*
- *How can moderation strengthen confidence in teachers' judgments?*

# What principles guide moderation?

Moderation is most effective when:

1. it is conducted in a **spirit of professional learning and quality improvement** (expect some dissonance).
2. teachers (inside moderators) have **appropriate knowledge of content area, assessment practices,** and policies and procedures.
3. it is carried out regularly.
4. it is **begun at the planning stage** -prior to teaching and assessment (ensuring teachers share understandings about important learning and indicators of it).

# Further principles

5. **appropriate assessment** tasks are **decided** on or designed aligned to actual learning.
6. **equivalent assessments** are agreed, when desired, for cross-class or cross-school comparisons (e.g. cluster groups of schools for professional development purposes)
7. moderation processes lead to **improved learning and assessment**
8. **moderators outside of the school** (e.g. clusters of schools, facilitators, invited teachers from other schools) may be **periodically involved** to give independent feedback.

# Moderation leads to consistency

There is a need for consistency (of teacher judgments and overall teacher judgments):

- a) Over time – same evidence viewed at different times leading to same judgment of same teacher
- b) Against benchmarks or standards – equivalent application across different types of evidence
- c) By a teacher
- d) Between teachers – within same school and different schools

Moderation leads to interpreting and applying levels or standards in equivalent ways, and confirming teachers' judgments about their students' work.



# Moderation leads to comparability

- The focus of comparability is on the **assessable performance, not on the assessment task.**
- Students can be set different tasks or tests but demonstrate a common standard of achievement.
- While surface features of the performance may differ, the “characteristics of the knowledge, understanding and skills expected for the level of achievement will be equivalent.” (Maxwell, 2002)

# Moderation and equity

- Equity for moderation means that **every student has the opportunity to demonstrate their current capability compared with a benchmark or performance standard.**
- Opportunity can be idiosyncratic, because common assessment tasks do not necessarily enable each student to perform optimally – e.g. a writing task about experiences of sport will exclude some students.
- **Characteristics of task** and context are important.

# The benefits of involving students

- When students are actively involved they can participate in selecting evidence (e.g. samples of their work) that best demonstrate the intended learning outcomes.
- The process of assessment develops students' understanding of the desired outcomes and [success criteria](#).
- Making judgments is closely linked to developing the skills of self and peer-assessment.
- This can lead to shared expectations of learning and understandings of standards between teachers and students.
- Greater student confidence in teacher judgments.
- Provides greater transparency of the assessment process.

# The benefits of moderation - to teachers

- Brings together collective wisdom, resulting in greater consistency of judgment, and focused teaching.
- Provides greater confidence in teacher judgments and assurance that judgments are consistent with other professionals.
- Leads to shared expectations of learning and understandings of standards and progression of learning.
- Develops deeper understandings about content and progressions of learning.
- Improves quality of assessment.
- Alignment of expectations and judgments with standards or progressions, and hence improved teaching and learning.
- Assurance to parents and others that interpretations of students' achievements are in line with other professionals.

# The benefits of moderation

## - to leadership teams and Boards of Trustees

- Greater confidence in teachers' judgments and assurance that judgments are consistent within and across schools .
- Provides useful, dependable information for target setting.
- Provides information that can shape future professional development needs for teachers.

# Skills required for moderation and building a supportive learning culture

Professional  
respect and trust

Communication  
skills and  
participation in  
decision making

Open-mindedness  
to new information  
and perspectives

Deepening  
pedagogical and  
curriculum  
knowledge

Sharing of  
information and  
power

Shared  
responsibility

# The roles

Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Active participation in learning and assessment</li><li>•Complete work to the best of their ability</li><li>•Develop understanding of desired learning outcomes</li><li>•Participate in selecting evidence for moderation</li><li>•Use skills developed through self and peer assessment</li></ul>
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Select evidence to moderate</li><li>•Participate in the moderation process</li><li>•Share their expectations and interpretations in order to clarify their understandings about what students have achieved and what the next steps in learning are</li></ul>
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Provide a moderation coordinator/leader</li><li>•Provide regular opportunities for teachers to share their expectations and interpretations</li><li>•Develop consistent and cohesive policies and procedures for moderation</li><li>•Review their assessment cycles to incorporate regular moderation</li></ul>

# Moderation is a process





# References

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- Sutton, R. (2009) Scottish Learning Festival Sept 2009 ([http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/C1C\\_RuthSutton\\_tcm4-565316.ppt#256,1,'Moderation'](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/C1C_RuthSutton_tcm4-565316.ppt#256,1,'Moderation')) (retrieved 09 July 2010)
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# Making sound teacher judgments and moderating them

## Module Two: Moderation Series for Primary Teachers

# Module Overview

This module is designed to support teachers when they are making and moderating their judgments of a student's learning in a writing, reading or maths task or activity. This also includes moderation of the use of an assessment tool, e.g. running records.

It looks at:

- how judgments require interpretive evidence
- what is appropriate and fair evidence of learning
- examining valid, consistent and comparable teacher judgments
- the moderation process

# Current practice of making teacher judgments

## Discussion questions:

- *How do you make judgments on student learning and achievement?*
- *What information do you collect and use?*
- *How **appropriate** are these assessment tasks or tools?  
How do you know?*
- *How do you know what **quality achievement looks like**?*
- *How do you make **dependable** teacher judgments?*
- *How do you know your expectations of learning and judgments of student work align with those of your colleagues?*

# Judgments can vary

- Teachers know that student samples of work can ‘tell you many things’. Interpretation or judgment is informed by professional knowledge: about the content (e.g. mathematical knowledge and concepts), learning processes, progression in learning etc.
- As teachers, you vary in your beliefs, understandings, expectations about, and judgments of, student learning.
- When you discuss samples of work with other teachers, your own knowledge deepens.

# Judgments are cultural and social

- Teachers use social, cultural and contextual knowledge in forming judgments of student work.
- Assessment is not a simple matching exercise that occurs between a work sample and standards of achievement.
- Assessment is a complex task that is grounded in the social and cultural experiences of those involved. (Lenore, 2008)

# Judgments require some interpretive evidence

- Teachers make **many judgments** about student learning every day. They are based on their expectations of students' learning.
- Teachers' judgments should be based on adequate **evidence** of student learning, that is **interpreted by reference** to some **framework** of knowledge (such as curriculum) or **standards**.
- **Adequate evidence** (visual, written, oral, physical construction of learning) means we are sure learning is embedded and not just a one-off or fluke occurrence.

# Plan to collect appropriate information

What evidence we collect and how we collect it, depends on our purpose, the type of information needed and the intended use.

- **For daily teaching and learning purposes** one-off informal judgments might be used, e.g. observations during teaching, recorded comments in modelling books, student self-assessment, such as highlighting indicators on a matrix.
- **For reporting and accountability purposes** judgments need to be more extensive, formal, consistent and comparable.
- The evidence we collect should be fair and appropriate to ensure it promotes consistent and comparable judgments.



# Gather fair assessments by ...

- Giving every student opportunities to demonstrate their current capability
- Making adjustments when necessary, such as enlarged copies of the assessment task for visually impaired, longer time frames for physically impaired students; choice of topics, use of first language.
  - ❖ *How do you give adequate opportunity to each student to demonstrate what they know and can do?*
  - ❖ *How fair is it to adjust assessments for individual students?*
  - ❖ *How realistic is it for busy teachers to make these adjustments?*

## Gather assessment information thoughtfully using appropriate tools

1. *When you assess a child's reading progress what assessment tasks or tools do you use?*
  - a. *Under what conditions (e.g. part of normal lesson, a separate teacher-child session) or levels of learning?*
  - b. *If you use Running Records, are they seen or unseen materials?*
  - c. *How confident are you that you administer a 'Running Record' or Numpu in as consistent a way as your colleague administers them?*

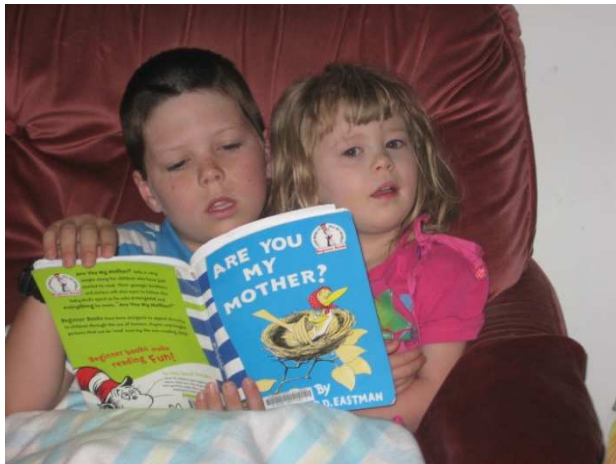
# Information to guide selection of appropriate maths assessments

- This website can support teachers to select appropriate maths tools or assessment approaches according to: purpose, type of information needed, and intended use: [www.nzmaths.co.nz/selecting-assessment-tool](http://www.nzmaths.co.nz/selecting-assessment-tool)

# Information to guide selection of literacy assessments

This website can support teachers to select appropriate literacy assessment tools:

[www.Assessmenttki.org.nz/Assessment-tool-resources](http://www.Assessmenttki.org.nz/Assessment-tool-resources)



# Interpreting information consistently

How consistent are your judgments of similar evidence, over:

**1. Time** (same evidence in Feb, May, Oct, Dec)

*How do you know, and ensure, you reach consistent judgments of students' work through the year?*

**2. Students** (same evidence about different students)

*How do your judgments vary across gender, ethnicity, or various individual traits (behavioural, learning etc)? Should they vary?*

**3. Classes or schools** (same evidence )

*How consistent are your judgments from year to year , across classes or schools? How could you find out?*

# Examples of comparable writing assessments

- When skills are clearly specified and referenced to a common framework (like the National Standards) the assessment task or context can differ.
- *On Saterdag I went to my brothas soca game. We had oranges at haf time and i had a ice blok. (Mia 5 yrs; Writing in a recount context; Writing L1ii)*
- *The butafly hatcd out of a kococon. It went in their as a catapila and came out lots of culas. (Mia 5 yrs; Writing in a Science context; WritingL1ii)*

# Writing sample

- A child's use of deep features (underlying characteristics of e.g. impact, vocabulary and voice) can be assessed in a variety of forms like letters to a friend, a poem, a report on a Science project, a Social Studies poster.

Dear Nana,

On Monday our hens escaped the coop and ventured into the garden. They scratched and discovered lots of worms and slugs to eat. Mum yelled, "Oh no, look at my uprooted cylcamen! Oh well, at least the hens have manured the garden."

From Nicole.

# Moderation processes





# Effective moderation

Moderation is most effective when:

- It is built on a culture of professional dialogue, support and risk-taking
- It is based around an inquiry approach
- The process is planned, resourced and reviewed
- Learning about the process is recorded for wider application across the school
- There is a leader or co-ordinator.

# Skills required for moderation and building a supportive learning culture

Professional  
respect and trust

Communication  
skills and  
participation in  
decision making

Open-mindedness  
to new information  
and perspectives

Deepening  
pedagogical and  
curriculum  
knowledge

Sharing of  
information and  
power

Shared  
responsibility

# Moderation consists of six phases

1. **Planning** for moderation.
2. **Clarifying and extending teacher knowledge** of curriculum content; learning, teaching and assessment processes.
3. **Collecting evidence** of student learning.
4. **Analysing the evidence.**
5. **Interpreting** and sharing the analysis.
6. Continuing and **reviewing moderation processes.**

# Phase 1: Planning for moderation

Effective moderation builds on meticulous planning of process and content :

- Identifying personnel (Who is involved? Who is the facilitator or leader?)
- Planning timetable (What is the best timing and frequency for participants? How long is the ideal moderation meeting? In what curriculum areas?)
- Identifying the area of learning that you wish to gather consistent judgments on
- Deciding what you will moderate - a piece of writing, a reading or mathematics task or activity, the administration of an assessment tool , e.g. running records.
- Timeframe (e.g. by end of week 3)

# Planning for moderation: considerations

Schools design their moderation processes to suit their situation and needs.

They consider factors such as:

- the purpose, learning area and context of the moderation
- the frequency of the moderation
- the number of student samples to be included
- the nature of any teacher/student annotations
- how the moderation will occur over time
- how the school will document and evaluate their moderation processes as part of their assessment procedure
- how new teachers will be inducted.

# Planning for moderation: considerations

1. Who in your staff should be involved in moderation?
2. Who might lead and/or co-ordinate the process?
3. When can you focus on moderation? (e.g. Staff or team meetings; CRT days....)
4. What skills or knowledge might you need?
5. What aspects of curriculum do you need to understand more fully?
6. What assessment tools do you want to learn more about? Use consistently?

# Role of leader/coordinator

In moderation there are a number of administrative jobs that will require organising.

Some of these are:

- Gathering and preparing samples for moderation e.g. making samples anonymous, photocopying multiple copies of student work (e.g. Writing)
- Communicating expectations to teachers
- Establishing ground rules for discussions
- Setting the agenda
- Preparing annotation and marking sheets
- Managing the meeting (time)
- Appointing a note/minute taker.

# Phase 2: Clarifying and extending teacher knowledge

## Content of moderation

- ❖ How sound are teachers':
  - **Curriculum** knowledge (key concepts, developmental progressions)
  - **Pedagogical** knowledge (learning, teaching and assessment)
  - Awareness of, and familiarity with, a **range of assessment tools and activities**
  - Awareness of, and familiarity with, **reference point, framework or standards**
- ❖ Time spent on exploring understanding of progressions of learning, or the language used in the standards, will lead to greater shared understanding of the assessment criteria.



# One approach for moderation

One approach:

- Once an activity or task has been decided, teachers share expectations of what students know and are able to do e.g. punctuation.
- Refer to professional reference material and standards to develop teachers' understanding of content, concepts and progressions.
- Clarify understanding of terminology or phrases used.
- Agree on appropriate assessment task requiring the same assessment characteristics.
- Collaboratively identify success criteria for task and incorporate into planning.
- Decide on level of teacher (or student) annotation expected.
- Decide on a timescale for teaching and learning.
- Share understandings with other teachers and students.
- Use same success criteria as basis for all teacher judgments.

# Phase 3: Collecting evidence of student learning

There are a number of ways to collect evidence:

- Decide on number of samples of assessments to be moderated at session.
- Decide how these samples will be selected. e.g. This could be a sample of work assessed to be in the high range, mid range and low range in relation to the success criteria, every 5<sup>th</sup> student on class roll or could be samples of work that teachers are unsure how to assess.

What is collected?

- For a piece of writing: student writing samples are mainly used
- For moderating a reading or maths task: the task, text and questions the student responded to may be used, along with notes of student questions
- For administration of an assessment tool: this could be a student's running record and the associated teacher analysis, or a video tape of a teacher administering a running record.

# What do you collect?

- *What do you collect in relation to these sources:*
  - *Formal tasks/assessments?* e.g. [www.nzmaths.co.nz/selecting-assessment-tool](http://www.nzmaths.co.nz/selecting-assessment-tool)
  - *Observations/classroom information?*  
[www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/consistent\\_teacher/moderate.htm](http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/consistent_teacher/moderate.htm)
  - *Student self and peer assessments?*  
[www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/two/self\\_and\\_peer\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/two/self_and_peer_e.php)
- *How similar are you to other teachers in what you collect?*
- *How similar is the degree of teacher help given or student independence?*
- *How many samples do you collect for each student?*

# When gathering information, be mindful of influences on students

These student factors may affect their capacity to demonstrate knowledge and skills:

- Perceived relevance of/interest in content and task.
- Appropriate level of challenge.
- Mood or emotional state.
- Energy levels (recent sleep and food intake).
- Peer and family interactions.
- Disposition to learn (motivation, language).
- Physical attributes (e.g. visual impairment).

# Phase 4: Analysing the evidence

Once the teaching and learning 'unit' of work has been completed, teachers need to independently assess their own students' work, using the agreed success criteria identified in Phase 2.

When analysing the evidence, teachers should:

- identify how the student work specifically meets the success criteria (e.g. using a highlighter pen)
- use annotation sheets to record key points and judgments made
- identify next learning steps for student
- remove all student identification on students' work to be moderated before it is shared with others.

# An analysis example (5 yrs independent writing)

**Identify, using different colours, deep/surface features**

- On Friday I went out sind (outside) to look for Worms but thir were not one worm. To get the worms out of the mud I had to jump and thump. Some Girls and boys fod (found) little piles of mud wher the worms live. Then we went insind and looked at worms wriggle on papa. (paper)

**Briefly describe key features demonstrated in sample**

Deep features:

- attempts to add more detail to descriptions of physical qualities
- mainly simple sentences
- records personal experience
- expresses simple thoughts

Surface features:

- attempts to use capital letters and full stops
- identifies most letter sounds
- spells some high frequency words

# Phase 5: Interpreting and sharing evidence

A moderation session has four goals:

1. Identify similarities and differences in judgments
2. Resolve any differences
3. Achieve consistency of judgments
4. Achieve shared understanding of consistency of criteria and language used to assess

Teachers [engage in professional discussion](#), perhaps asking questions, such as:

*How typical is the sample of work for this child?*

*What surprised you?*

*What are you unsure about?*

*How well does the work show evidence of the success criteria?*

*What will you do next to help the child's learning?*

# Phase 5: Interpreting and sharing the evidence

Teachers will need to come to moderation meetings with open minds, with the possibilities of adjusting their opinions, expectations and their way of making judgments in the future.

Preparing for moderation sessions as a team or year level group:

- Each teacher makes available the evidence from one student, according to what was decided. If moderating as a school, the team will select one student's work to take to whole-school moderation.



# Phase 5: Interpreting and sharing evidence

Preparing for moderation sessions (Cont’):

- Annotated sheets are made available for teachers to identify where work meets the standard
- Team leader photocopies/photographs contents of the moderation folder for each team member
- Resources are made available, such as the Literacy Learning progressions, Numeracy progressions and stages
- Recording sheets are made available for the moderation meeting.

# A suggested session

## Conducting moderation sessions:

1. All teachers look at the same piece of work.
2. Everyone reads whole script through without marking, commenting or discussing and assesses it against the success criteria/indicators on a recording sheet.
3. All teachers provide their judgment of piece of work as a whole-standard/level.
4. The coordinator records everyone's judgments.
5. The group reviews judgments and identifies areas of greatest similarity and difference.
6. Teachers provide evidence and reasons for their judgments that are both similar and different.
7. Get views of all teachers.
8. For each key feature, work towards consensus about the standard/level assigned.
9. Record any changes in judgments as a result of discussion.
10. Record any suggestions for improvement of future moderation sessions.

# Example of recording sheet

	<b>Initial judgment- level/stand ard</b>	<b>Success Criterion 1</b>	<b>Success Criterion 2</b>	<b>Success Criterion 3</b>	<b>Success Criterion 4</b>	<b>Final judgment- level/stand ard</b>
<b>Teacher A</b>						
<b>Teacher B</b>						
<b>Teacher C</b>						
<b>Teacher D</b>						

# View differences as opportunities to deepen knowledge base

- Ask questions to clarify thinking and understanding of language
- Explore solutions-the goal is to agree on evidence based reasoning
- Adapt thinking and adjust judgment after listening to informed ideas of others
- Tolerate and think about different perspectives
- Identify where more knowledge or resources are needed, and where processes could be modified
- Get views of all teachers.

# Keeping discussions focused and useful

- At the start of the process tolerate disagreement
- Present and share thinking in relation to evidence of key features not just 'gut feelings'
- Through discussion, expose reasons for differences (expectations, interpretation of language)
- Check understanding of language used and reach shared clarity
- Keep focused on the key features
- Ensure all teachers' views are heard
- Treat as learning exercise not checking to see judgments are 'right' or 'wrong'.

# Check for bias

- “When working towards consistent assessment based on teacher judgment there is a need to consider how information about aspects of students’ behaviour or knowledge, special education need, or the general verbal ability of a student can impact on teachers’ judgments of performance in a particular task”. (Harlen 2005)
- Assessment that relies on a significant degree of teacher judgment is primarily subjective. It can be useful to examine bias with teachers as “bias can result , unconsciously, from prior dealings with students based on attitude, behaviour, gender, race or disability.” (Lenore, 2008)

# Check for bias

Some common biases in assessing student work include:

- considering longer texts are more worthy than shorter ones
- considering neater handwriting is more worthy than untidy writing
- use of internalised, unstated standards that individual teachers have developed over time ‘in their heads’ instead of agreed criteria
- notions of being ‘fair’ to a student by giving them the ‘benefit of the doubt’ rather than what the evidence shows
- judging work on what teachers consider students *deserve* based on prior knowledge or inferred judgment of student effort.

# Phase 6: Review of moderation processes

## Discussion Questions:

- What did the moderation process reveal to me about my knowledge of the curriculum and progressions of learning, or assessment?
- What further professional learning might I/we need?
- What might I do differently in my teaching to help students' learning and achievement?
- How might our moderation processes be extended to other curriculum areas?
- If in a large school, how can the information gained from moderation be shared across other areas of the school?
- How useful is our recording of the process and how can it be improved?



# References

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# Making overall teacher judgments and moderating them

## Module Three: Moderation Series for Primary Teachers

# Module Overview

This module is designed to support teachers when they are moderating their Overall Teacher Judgments (OTJs) in writing, reading or mathematics in relation to the National Standards.

Getting consistency of OTJs within a school is important for reporting to parents and annual reporting to the Board of Trustees.

It looks at:

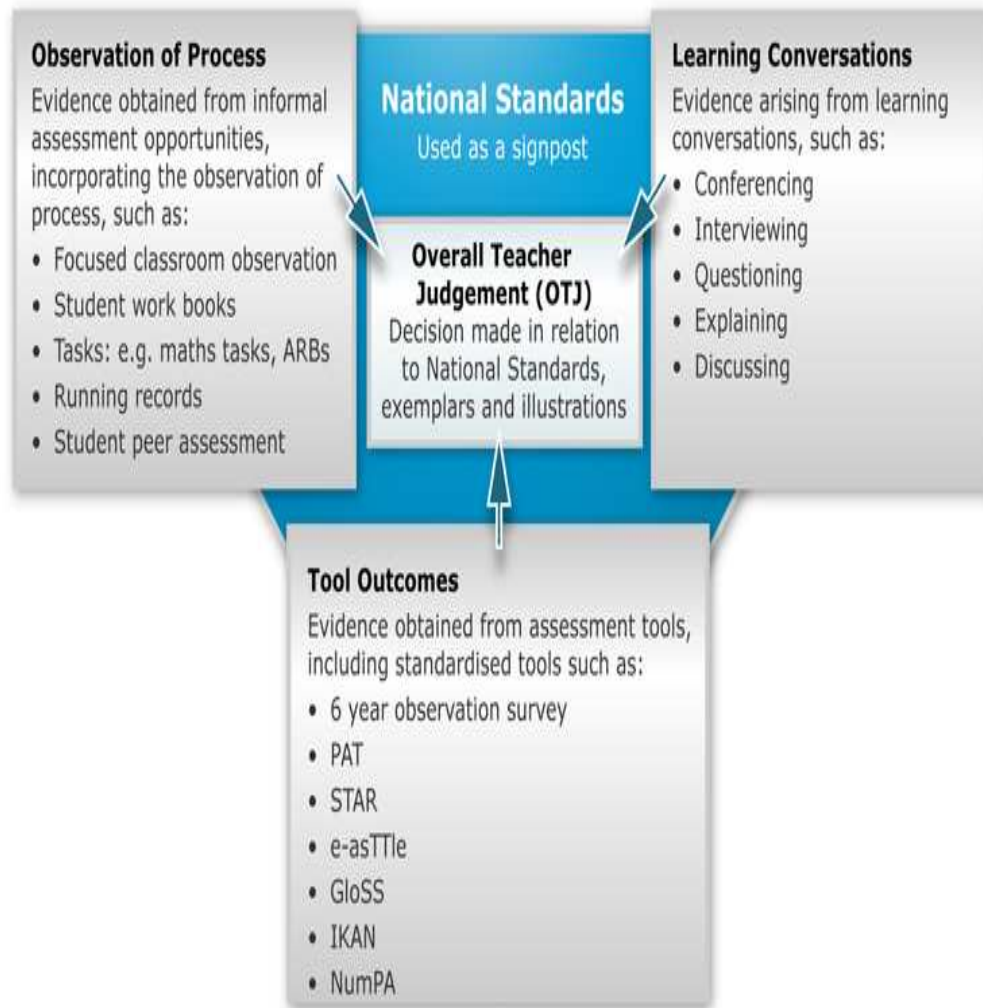
- how OTJs require interpretive evidence
- what is appropriate and fair evidence of learning
- examining valid, consistent and comparable teacher judgments
- the moderation process.

# What do we base our overall teacher judgment (OTJ) on?

The *National Standards Factsheet* states,

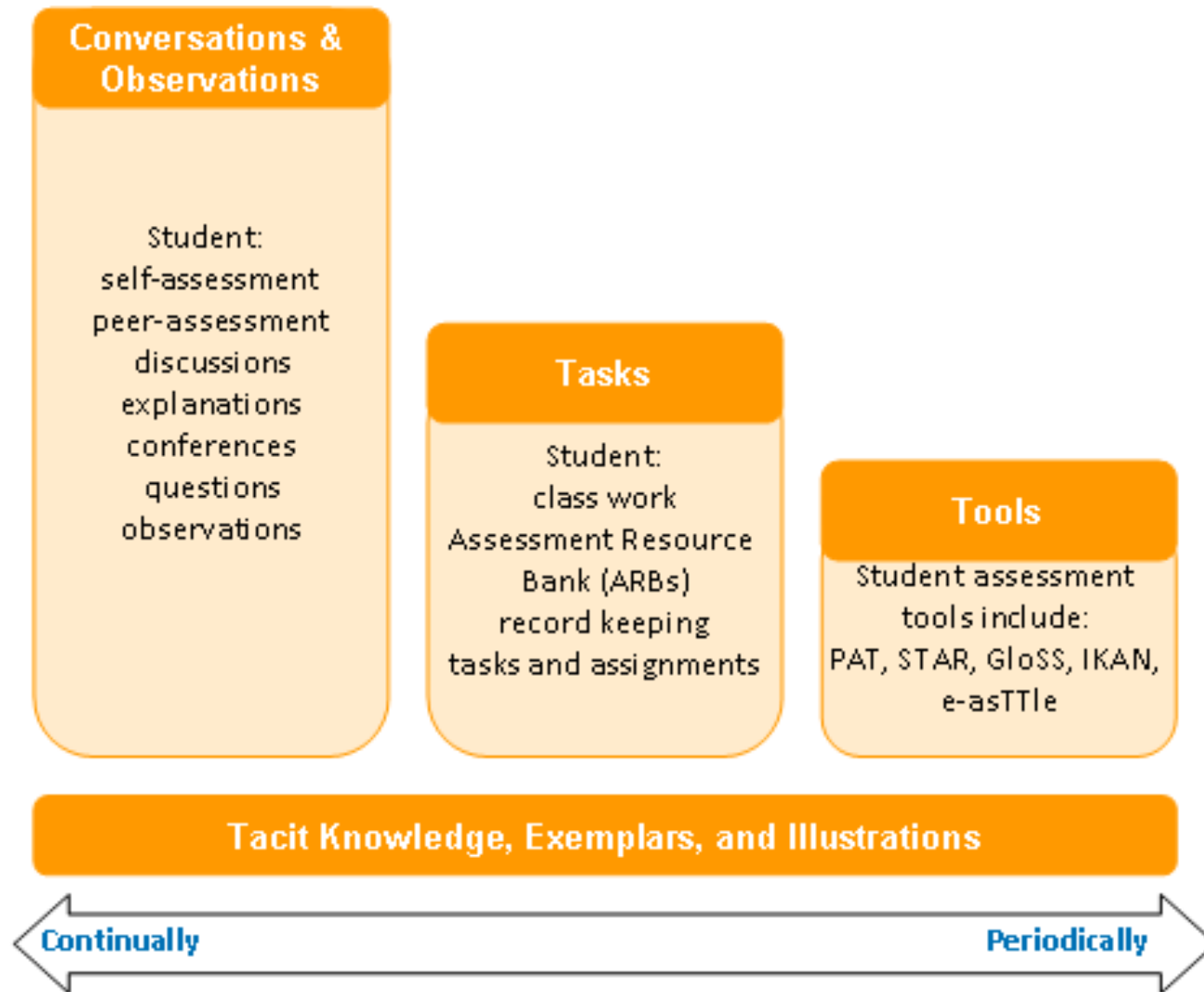
“An overall teacher judgment involves drawing on and applying the evidence gathered up to a particular point in time in order to make an overall judgment about a student’s progress and achievement.”

# Planning for OTJs requires several sources of information



- Any assessment or observation is a 'snap-shot' or sample of what students know or can do.
- Sound assessment is based on a wide range of relevant information collected over time, in a variety of learning situations.
- Considering several sources of quality information leads to more defensible overall teacher judgments.
- Refer to:  
<http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Overall-teacher-judgement/Using-a-range-of-information>

# Assessment activities and tools- another view



# Thinking more about OTJs

“Teachers are best placed to determine quality of student achievement over time and at specific points because teachers are integral to requirements of teaching, assessment tasks and expectations of quality performance.” (Wyatt-Smith, Klenowski & Gunn, 2010, p.61)

## Discussion Questions:

- What do you think about teachers being best placed to make OTJs (derived from a range of information) rather than a score on a test like asTTle or PATs determining student achievement?
- What are the risks for teachers to make OTJs?

# How are defensible OTJs made?

Making defensible overall teacher judgments relies on **understanding the standards**, **planning**, **gathering** and **interpreting** high quality assessment information that is *dependable* and appropriate (*relates to the question we ask, or the use of the data*). Technically this is referred to as *validity*.



# Quality OTJs are consistent and comparable

**Comparable** means that **similar interpretations of the underlying concepts or skills can be made**, using different evidence.

“Students can be set different tasks or tests but demonstrate a common standard of performance.”

(Maxwell, 2002, p.16)

E.g. A child's capability to skip count in 2s might be assessed using a PE game, distributing resources, or during a NUMPA assessment. The **underlying characteristic** is the child can skip count, **regardless of the assessment task or tool used**.

# OTJs are consistent when...

- the same overall teacher judgments are made from the same evidence over time (*looking at same evidence would we make the same judgment?*)
- the same overall teacher judgments are made of similar standards across different types of evidence
- different teachers make the same overall teacher judgment on the same evidence

# How consistent are our OTJs?

## Discussion Questions:

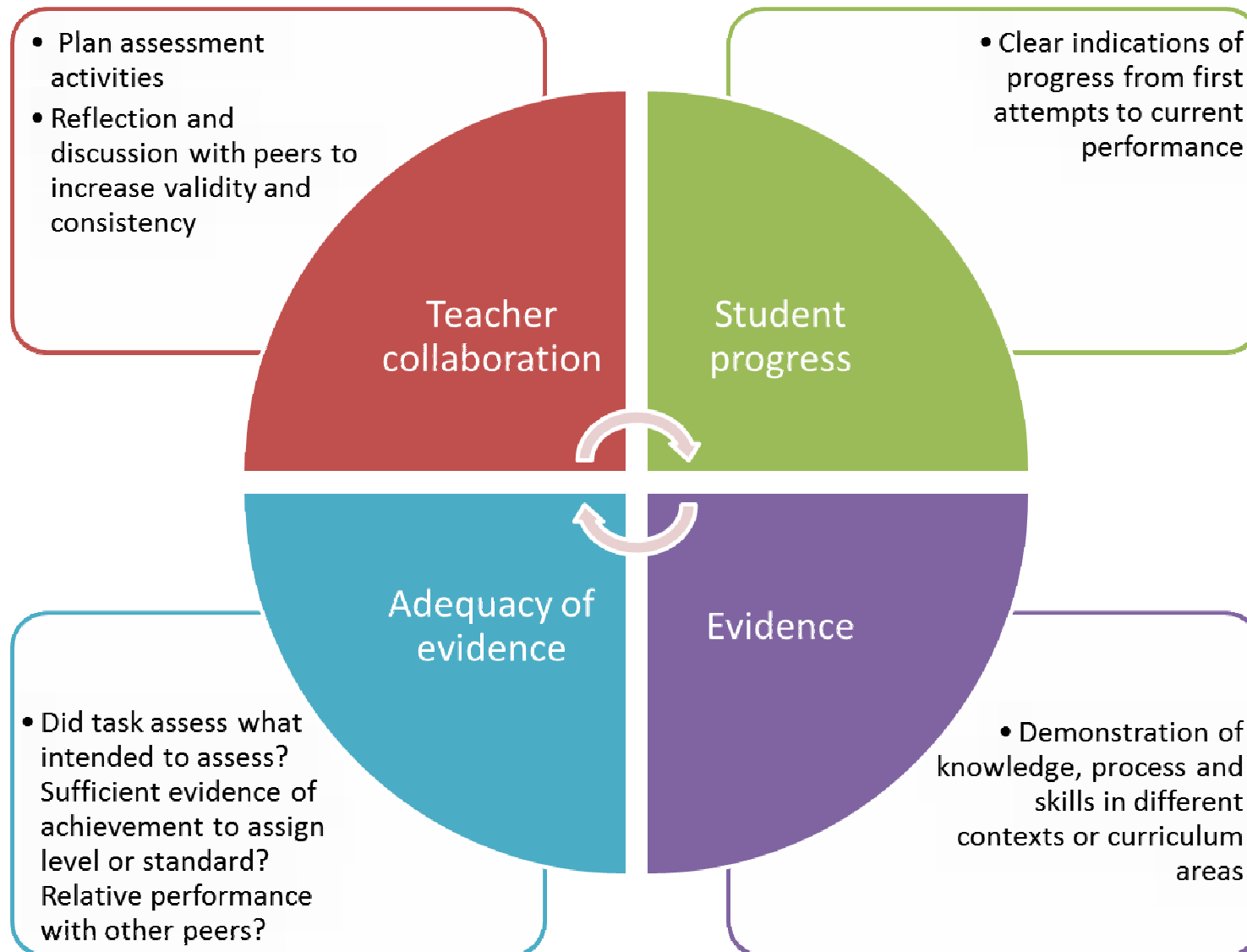
- How consistent are our judgments with teachers of students:
  - in years above or below ours?
  - across the school?
  - in other similar or different schools (of similar aged students to ours)?
- How consistent are our judgments with an outside person? (e.g. adviser, facilitator, a teacher from another school)
- How useful might it be to liaise with other schools or relevant facilitators?

# Confidence comes from a balance of sound assessment information

Assessment information can be collected formally or informally.

Informal	Formal
Classroom observations and activities	Performance in assessment tasks
Self and/or peer assessments	Use of skills in other contexts
Responses to questions in class	Performance in tests

# Moderation of overall teacher judgments



# Moderation processes



# Moderation processes

The moderation process for OTJ is similar to the process for making judgments about a piece of work or an assessment, as outlined in Module 2 (e.g. Writing) but it involves considering several sources of quality information.

# Moderation consists of six phases

1. **Planning** for moderation
2. **Clarifying and extending teacher knowledge** of curriculum content; learning, teaching and assessment processes
3. **Collecting evidence** of student learning
4. **Analysing the evidence**
5. **Interpreting** and sharing the analysis
6. Continuing and **refining moderation processes**



# Phase 1: Planning for moderation

Effective moderation builds on meticulous planning of process and content:

- Identifying personnel (Who is involved? Who is the facilitator or leader?)
- Planning timetable (What is the best timing and frequency for participants? How long is the ideal moderation meeting? In what curriculum areas?)
- Begin with team collaborative discussions on a chosen aspect of the standards (Reading might be: read, respond to and think critically in non fiction texts; Writing might be: use writing to think about, record and communicate experiences in ; maths might be: solving problems and modelling situations)
- Share and refine knowledge/understandings about the relevant standard (Refer to guidance: e.g. Literacy Progressions, the Number Framework)
- Decide on what you will moderate - sample or artefacts to collect (e.g. For reading, writing, maths)
- Timeframe (e.g. by end of week 3)

# Phase 2: Clarifying and extending teacher knowledge

## Content of moderation

- ❖ How sound are teachers':
  - **Curriculum** knowledge (key concepts, developmental progressions)
  - **Pedagogical** knowledge (learning, teaching and assessment)
  - Awareness of, and familiarity with, a **range of assessment tools and activities**
  - Awareness of, and familiarity with, **reference point, framework or standards**
- ❖ Time spent on exploring understanding of progressions of learning, or the language used in the standards, will lead to greater shared understanding of the assessment criteria.

# Suggested approach

A suggested approach could be:

- Once the range of assessment activities has been decided, teachers share expectations of what students know and are able to do
- Refer to professional reference material and standards to develop teachers' understanding of content, concepts and progressions
- Clarify understanding of terminology or phrases used in the standards

# Phase 3: Collecting evidence of student learning

There are a number of ways to collect evidence:

- Decide on number of samples, portfolios or work in e-portfolios to be moderated at session
- Decide how these samples will be selected. Evidence of an 'at' the standard is a good place to start. Then evidence of student work for whom there is a level of uncertainty about the OTJ (e.g. should this student be 'at' standard for that year level or 'below'?)
- Decide on the range of samples to be selected.

# Examples of what to collect

Reading Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most recent running record</li> <li>• STAR result</li> <li>• Observed behaviours, anecdotal notes from conversations and interactions with texts</li> <li>• Assessment Resource Bank task</li> <li>• Self assessments</li> </ul>
Writing Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observed behaviours, anecdotal notes from conversations and interactions on writing samples in draft books</li> <li>• asTTle writing</li> <li>• NEMP task</li> <li>• Supplementary Spelling Assessments</li> </ul>
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observed behaviours, anecdotal notes from conversations and interactions in mathematics tasks</li> <li>• GLOSS Strategy Stage</li> <li>• PAT Maths</li> <li>• Self and peer assessments</li> </ul>

# Phase 4: Analysing the evidence

Before the moderation process, teachers need to analyse the evidence independently and follow a standardised school process to reach OTJs for a range of students in their class. Teachers should not make these judgments for all students yet, as the moderation process may inform teachers' decision making.

When analysing the evidence, teachers should:

- identify how the student work specifically meets the standard (e.g. using a highlighter pen)
- use annotation sheets to record key points and judgments made
- identify next learning steps for the student
- remove all student identification on the portfolios of students' work to be moderated before it is shared with others.

# Phase 5: Interpreting and sharing evidence

A moderation session has four goals:

1. Identify similarities and differences in judgments
2. Resolve any differences
3. Achieve consistency of judgments
4. Achieve shared understanding of consistency of the relevant Standards and language used to assess

Teachers [engage in professional discussion](#), perhaps asking questions, such as:

*Do you need to gather other evidence from this child?*

*How typical is the sample of work for this child?*

*What surprised you?*

*What are you unsure about?*

*How well does the work show evidence of the success criteria?*

*What will you do next to help the child's learning?*

# Phase 5: Interpreting and sharing the evidence

As in moderating assessments, teachers will need to come to OTJ moderation meetings with open minds, with the possibilities of adjusting their opinions, expectations and their way of making judgments in the future.

Preparing for moderation sessions as a team or year level group:

- Each teacher makes available the range of evidence from one student, according to what was decided (i.e. An 'at' or for whom there is a level of uncertainty about the OTJ.) This could be portfolios or e-portfolios. (If moderating as a school, the team will select one student's work to take to whole-school moderation.)



# Phase 5: Interpreting and sharing evidence

## Preparing for moderation sessions (Cont'):

- Annotated sheets are made available for teachers to identify where work meets the standard
- Team leader photocopies/photographs contents of the moderation folder for each team member (This is not needed with e-portfolios as all that is required is a log on)
- Resources are made available, such as the relevant National Standards, the Literacy Learning progressions, Numeracy progressions and stages
- Recording sheets are made available for the moderation meeting.

# A Suggested session

## Conducting moderation sessions:

1. The agreed samples or portfolios of work are examined independently by each teacher and they make independent OTJ, using the agreed success criteria informed by the National Standards, the Literacy Learning progressions, Numeracy progressions and stages)
2. The independent OTJ by each teacher is recorded in a log
3. Compare and discuss evidence and analysis by each teacher
4. Discuss differences and underlying reasons
5. Record any changes in overall teacher judgments
6. Record issues relating to understanding of the criteria, standards or progressions
7. Record any suggestions for improvement of future moderation sessions.

# Example of recording sheet

The table below is an example of a recording sheet to monitor the consistency of OTJs.

	Teacher 1's OTJ	Teacher 2's OTJ	Teacher 3's OTJ	Teacher 4's OTJ	Final OTJ
Student A					
Student B					
Student C					
Student D					

# Discussion Questions

- What National Standards are you interpreting or emphasising differently from other teachers? Why?
- What can you agree on and what would be the student's next learning steps?
- What do you do when you do not agree with other teachers?

# Checking for bias

- “When working towards consistent assessment based on teacher judgment there is a need to consider how information about aspects of students’ behaviour or knowledge, special education need, or the general verbal ability of a student can impact on teachers’ judgments of performance in a particular task”. (Harlen, 2005)
- Assessment that relies on a significant degree of teacher judgment is primarily subjective. It can be useful to examine bias with teachers as “bias can result , unconsciously, from prior dealings with students based on attitude, behaviour, gender, race or disability.” (Lenore, 2008)

# Check for bias

Some common biases in assessing student work include:

- considering longer texts more worthy than shorter ones
- considering neater handwriting more worthy than untidy writing
- use of internalised, unstated standards that individual teachers have developed over time 'in their heads' instead of agreed criteria
- notions of being 'fair' to a student by giving them the 'benefit of the doubt' rather than what the evidence shows
- judging work on what teachers consider students' deserve based on prior knowledge or inferred judgment of student effort.

# Phase 6: Review of moderation processes

## Discussion Questions:

- What did we think about our own and others' judgments on 'performance level' of the student work? How accurate were our assessments?
- In what ways are we interpreting the reference point (e.g. National Standards) in similar or different ways?
- How consistent are our OTJs?
- On what aspects do we vary? Why?
- What knowledge or resources might we need to help our students improve?

# Phase 6: Review of moderation processes

- How might our different understandings be resolved?
- What would we do differently next time to moderate this or a different aspect of the curriculum area?
- What guidance might our team need?
- Consider establishing a 'moderation kit' (more details next slide). It may take a few sessions or meetings to devise a 'moderation kit'.



# Moderation kit

A team 'moderation kit' might contain:

- statements of your understanding about aspects of the moderation process
- the relevant National Standards
- samples of student work exemplifying the standard at a particular level
- guidelines about what type(s) or how many samples are needed for each student
- decisions about what needs to be moderated, by whom and when.

# Refining your 'moderation kit'

When your team is relatively comfortable with the moderation kit, share it with another team within the school, or another school and ask:

- What might they **copy or adopt**?
- What needs **more explanation**?
- What **modifications** do they suggest?
- How would a **teacher new to the school** use this kit?

# References

- Lenore, A. (2008) *Changing assessment practices: The case for online moderation*. Curtin University of Technology, Moderation processes for fair and comparable assessment. Teaching Development Unit.
- McMillan, J. (2007). *Classroom assessment: principles and practice for effective standards-based instruction* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). Boston: Pearson.
- Maxwell, G.S. (2002). Moderation of teacher judgments in student assessment. Discussion paper on assessment and reporting. School of Education: The University of Queensland.
- Wyatt-Smith, C., Klenowski, V., Gunn, S. (2010). The centrality of teachers' judgment practice in assessment: a study of standards in moderation. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*. 17:1, p.59-75.

# Reviewing and refining your moderation processes and systems

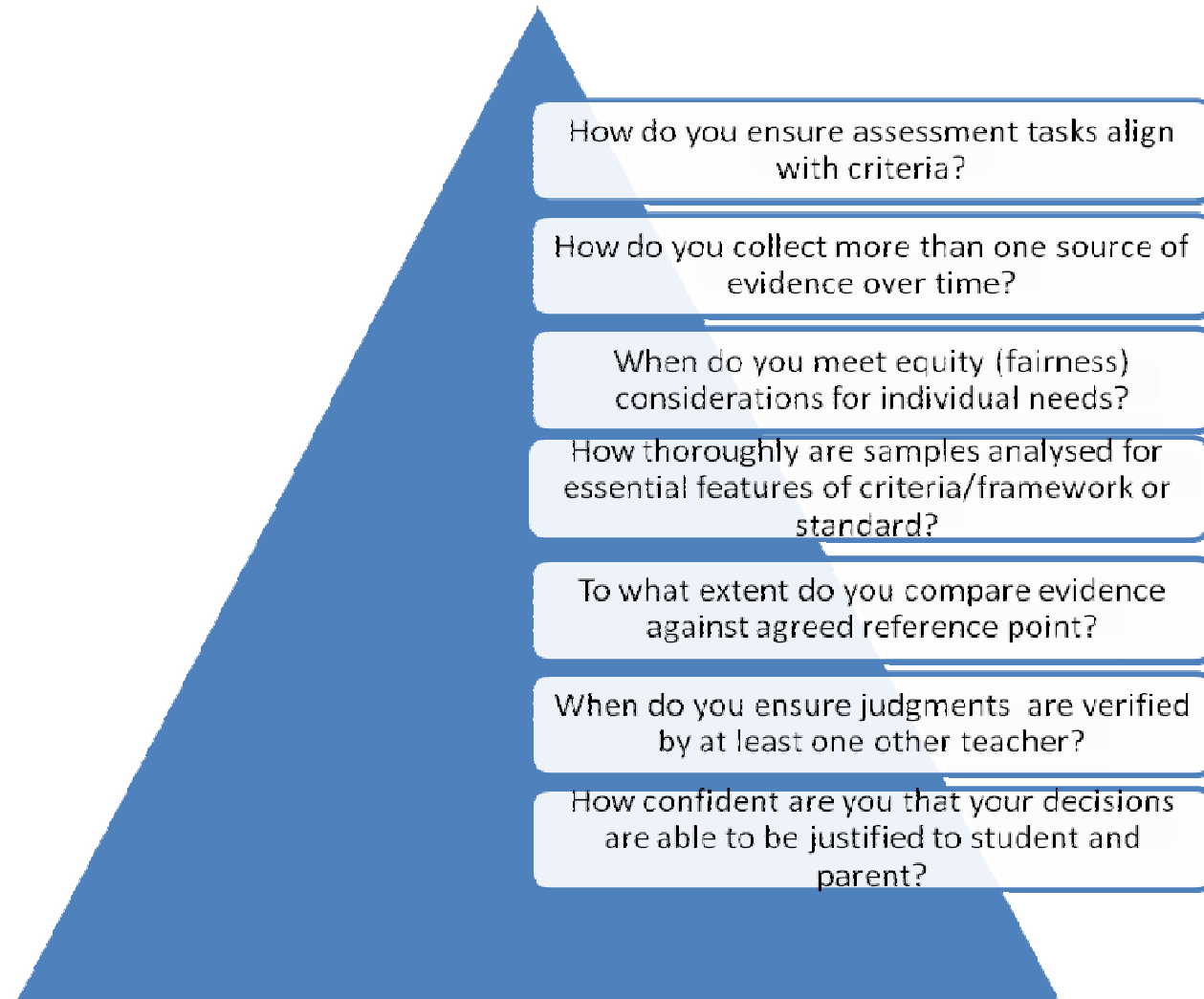
Module Four: Moderation Series for  
Primary Teachers

# Module Overview

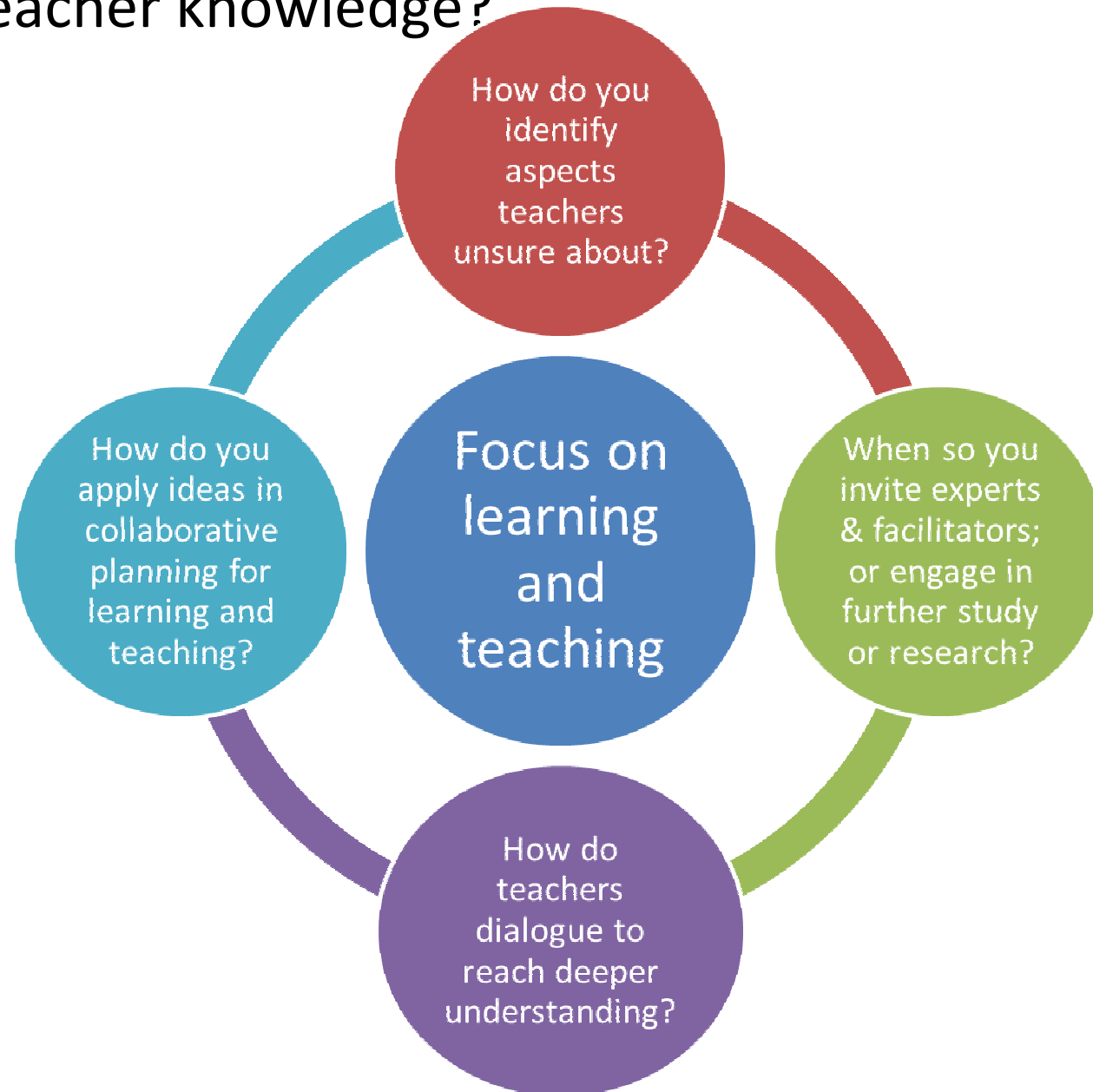
By the end of this module you will be able to discuss:

1. How you might review and refine your moderation processes.
2. How might multiple perspectives deepen everyone's knowledge.
3. What influences your moderation processes.
4. How moderation can result in more consistent, sound and defensible overall teacher judgments.

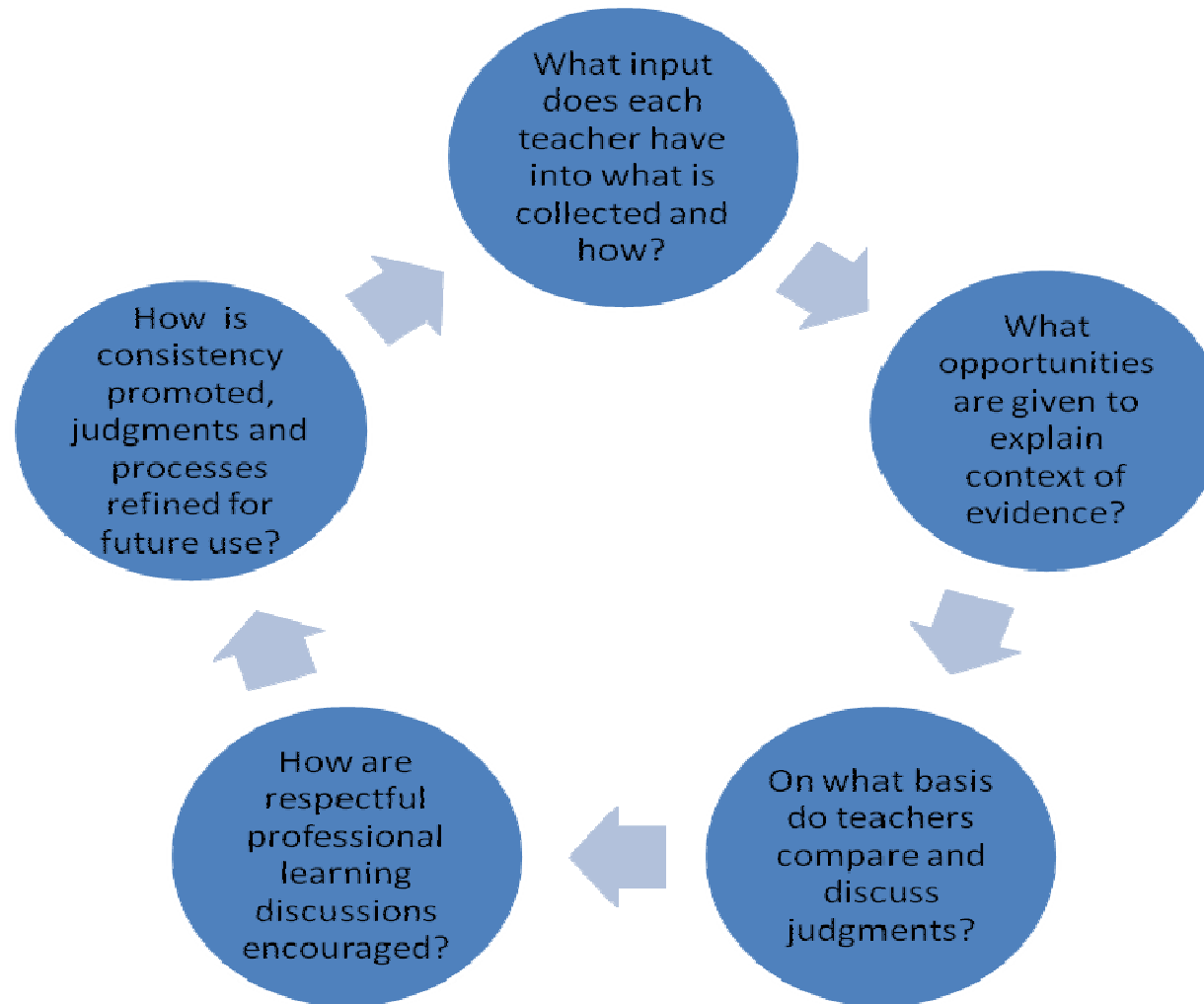
# How do you ensure assessments are fair, consistent and defensible?



# To what extent do you use moderation processes to deepen teacher knowledge?



# How collaborative are your moderation discussions?





# Thinking about influences on OTJs

## Discussion Questions:

- What impact does belief about learning make to judgments? (underachievement, student motivation or behaviour)
- What might influence your perspectives – like names, gender, neatness, length of response?
- What difference is made to your judgments when a person more senior or experienced than you offers a different perspective?
- How might you benefit from professional discussions and input of new knowledge?
- What triggers the need for moderation?

# Moderation requires multiple perspectives

“Teachers (insiders) view their students’ work holistically drawing on knowledge and input of the student, his/her capabilities, a range of data and impressions from the learning, teaching and assessment relationship. In contrast, another professional (e.g. Senior Teacher or Principal) may be detached from the teaching/learning experiences with that student, and have a different view on a sample of work. Moderation seeks to reconcile different (insider-outsider) perspectives.” (Radnor, 1993).

# To what extent do you value a range of perspectives?

Moderation as a complementary process values the knowledge and perspective of the teacher (insider) and other professionals (outsiders). Together, the insider and outsider combine (subjective) caring and deep knowledge of the student and his/her learning, and (objective) levels or standards of student learning and achievement, to reach a sound and defensible judgment.

# Reviewing your processes

( Sample of a self-review process)

What systems are in place?	What do we do now?	What would we like to do?	How can we do this?	By whom and when?
How do we facilitate collaborative planning for learning and assessment?				
How do we promote professional dialogue?				
How do we deepen teacher knowledge?				
How do we collect/analyse student learning?				

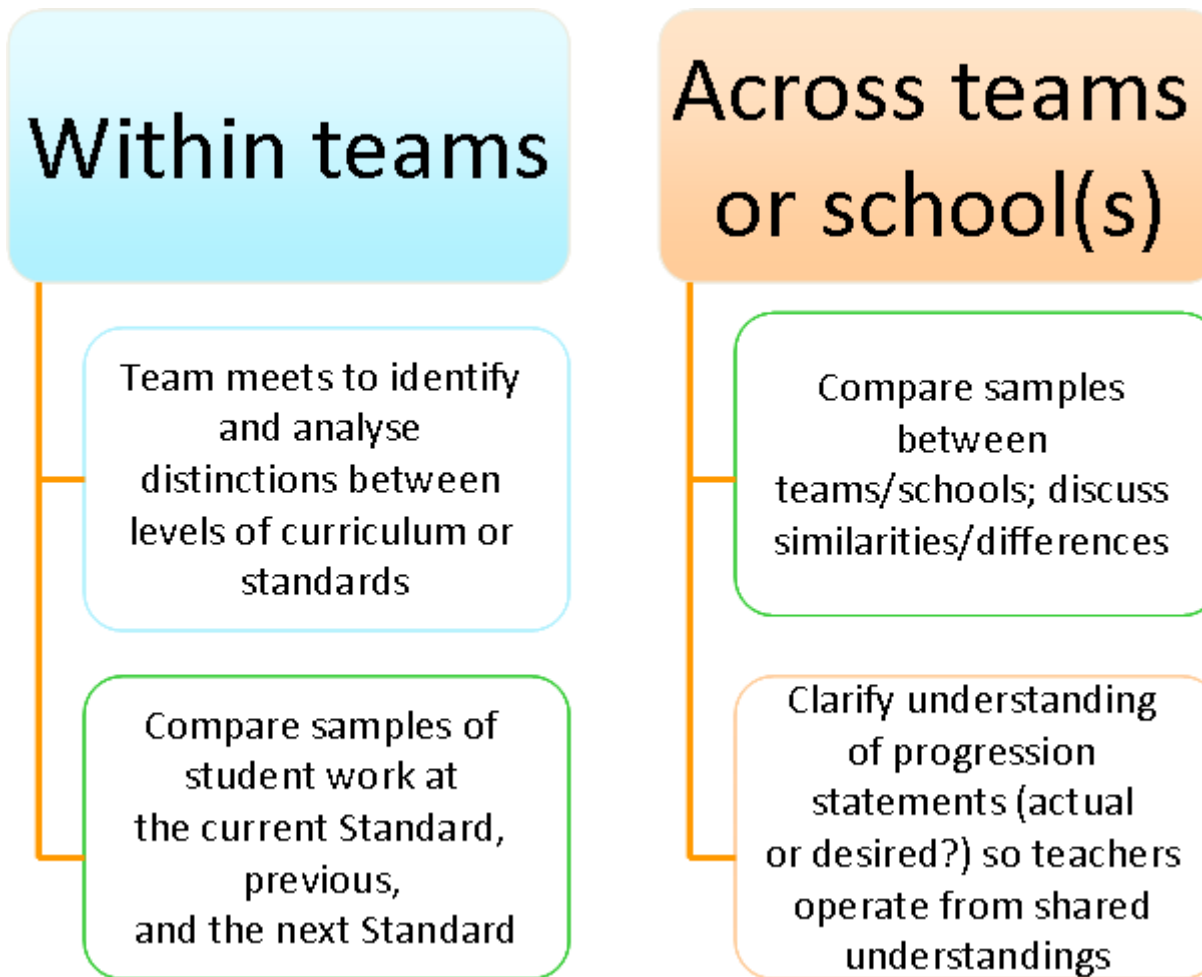
# How consistent are your judgments?

- How consistent are your judgments with teachers of students:
  - in years above or below yours?
  - across the school?
  - in other similar or different schools (of similar aged students to ours)
- How do you record and monitor your levels of consistency? (so you can see progress)
- How consistent are your judgments with an outside person? (e.g. Adviser, facilitator)
- How useful might it be to liaise with other schools or relevant facilitators?

# Ideas to improve the consistency of OTJs

1. Team selects one student's moderation folder that is 'at' the standard to take to whole-school moderation. As an extension, repeat the process only bringing the unresolved ones.
2. Record the independent decisions, both pre- and post-moderation, to track consistency of judgments over time.
3. Discuss the areas of commonality and differences in OTJ; underlying reasoning, and come to agreed understandings.
4. Record issues relating to curriculum coverage, student achievement, future improvements to moderation, processes, decisions made about the moderation process.
5. Consider the use of students' e-portfolios for moderation.
6. Discuss how a new teacher to the school is inducted into the moderation process.

# Refining moderation within schools, at transition, and across schools



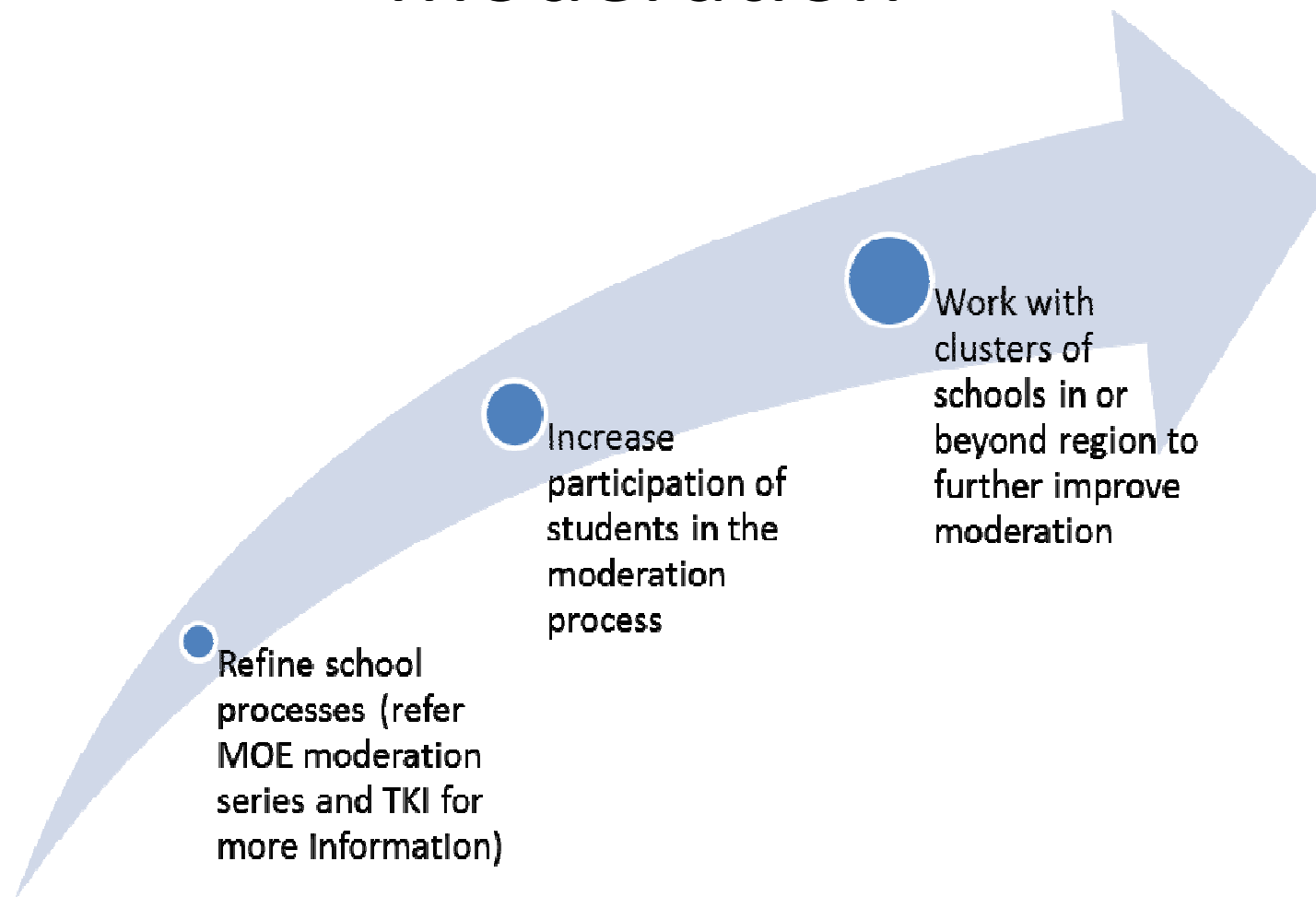
# Consider recording the process in a 'moderation kit'

A team/school 'moderation kit' guides new teachers and reminds other teachers about agreed procedures. It might contain:

- common understanding of essential learning and assessment
- agreed reference point(s) (e.g. NZC, National Curriculum Exemplars Writing Matrix; National Standards)
- samples of analysed student work exemplifying the standard at a particular level
- guidelines about what type(s) or how many samples are needed for each student
- decisions about what needs to be moderated, by whom and when.



# Continual improvement of moderation



# References

- Maxwell, G.S. (2002). Moderation of teacher judgements in student assessment. Discussion paper on assessment and reporting. School of Education: The University of Queensland.
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